DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 256 459 JC 850 242

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TITLE Leadership Imperatives for Program Planning and Assessment.
PUB DATE Apr 85
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual National Convention of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (65th, San Diego, CA, April 14-17, 1985).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; College Administration; *College Planning; *Community Colleges; *Leadership; *Program Development; *Program Evaluation; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

The educational decisions that are made today must consider the current situation of declining enrollment, but also take into account the resurgence in higher education that is certain to follow within the next decade. Community college administrators must take on the role of leaders (i.e., those who infuse an organization with values) rather than managers (i.e., those who seek to efficiently operate the organization within the framework of values and directions already determined). One of the first tasks of these community college leaders will be to establish an academic strategy, which looks beyond the most efficient way to accomplish current activities to see whether those activities are relevant to the rapidly changing external environment. As leaders, community college administrators must give greater priority to the development of long-range academic plans for curricula and programs. Program assessment goes hand-in-hand with program planning. If approached seriously, program assessment results in substantive instructional and administrative changes. The main criteria to be considered in program evaluation are the demand for, quality of, and cost of the programs. Based on these criteria, a number of instructional decisions are made, with respect to learning objectives, instructional methods, and devoted resources. The quality of these decisions depends upon the quality of the information upon which they are based. Statewide programs, such as the Program Data Monitoring System in Maryland, help provide colleges with such information for their use in program assessment efforts. (AYC)

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LEADERSHIP IMPERATIVES FOR PROGRAM PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT.

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MARYLAND STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

PRESENTED AT THE 65TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
APRIL 14-17, 1985

LEADERSHIP IMPERATIVES FOR PROGRAM PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

I AM PLEASED TO BE WITH YOU THIS AFTERNOON AND TO BE A MEMBER OF THIS PANEL WITH SUCH DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES AS DOCTORS ROUECHE AND CAMPBELL. I WOULD PREFER THAT MY COMMENTS TO YOU THIS AFTERNOON COULD BE COMPLETELY POSITIVE AND UPBEAT. BUT FRANKLY, MY MESSAGE WILL BE A MIXED ONE.

THESE ARE DIFFICULT TIMES FOR AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN PARTICULAR, AND I EXPECT THAT WE WILL BE LOOKING AT MORE OF THE SAME FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. OF COURSE, I AM NOT TELLING YOU ANYTHING THAT MOST IN THE AUDIENCE DO NOT ALREADY KNOW IN YOUR POSITIONS OF ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP -- ACADEMIC VICE-PRESIDENTS, DEANS OF INSTRUCTION, AND SO FORTH. YOU KNOW, FOR EXAMPLE, WHAT TIGHT BUDGETS DO TO YOUR ABILITY TO PURCHASE STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT FOR COMPUTER LABS. YOU KNOW, TOO, THE PRESSURES THAT DECLINING ENROLLMENT PLACES ON YOUR ACTIONS AND REACTIONS WITH FACULTY.

SO, IT IS WITH THESE CONDITIONS IN MIND THAT I TAKE SOMEWHAT OF A SKEPTICAL VIEW WHEN I HEAR PEOPLE SAY TO INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS YOU AND ME THAT WE ARE LUCKY TO BE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 1980'S. I AGREE THAT THERE ARE EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AHEAD OF US. BUT TO SAY WE ARE LUCKY, I THINK STRETCHES IT A BIT. IT REMINDS ME OF AN AD OUT OF THE CLASSIFIEDS THAT MY WIFE SHARED WITH ME WHEN SHE WAS LOOKING

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TO PURCHASE A CAT FOR OUR HOUSEHOLD. THE AD WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

> LOST -- BLACK AND WHITE SPOTTED TOM CAT. PARTIALLY LAME IN HIND QUARTERS, BLIND IN ONE EYE, RECENTLY CASTRATED. . . ANSWERS TO THE NAME OF "LUCKY".

I SUSPECT THAT THERE AREN'T MANY OF US WHO WANT MUCH TO DO WITH THAT KIND OF LUCK.

NEVERTHELESS, IT IS FAIR TO SAY, IT SEEMS TO ME, THAT THESE ARE TIMES OF IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICA'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. MOST OF YOU WOULD AGREE WITH ME IN THE CONCLUSION THAT A MANDATE FOR CHANGE TYPICALLY OCCURS WHEN ALL IS NOT WELL. NECESSITY CAN INDEED BE A CATALYST FOR SUCCESSFUL NEW DIRECTIONS. THE TRICK IS TO KEEP A POSITIVE AND OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF THINGS AND WORK TO BRING ALL OF THE COUNTERVAILING PRESSURES AND FORCES TOGETHER SO THAT THE ORGANIZATION CAN BE MOVED AHEAD TO WHERE IT WANTS TO BE. OF COURSE THIS IS MUCH EASIER SAID THAN DONE.

PARTICULARLY FOR SOMEONE SUCH AS MYSELF WHO WATCHES THE NIGHTLY NEWS ON A SOMEWHAT REGULAR BASIS, IT IS OFTENTIMES DIFFICULT TO SEE OPPORTUNITIES WHEN ALL ONE HEARS ABOUT ARE THE PROBLEMS. NIGHT AFTER NIGHT WE HEAR DOOM AND GLOOM ABOUT GROWING FEDERAL DEFICITS, HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE LIKE. BUT THERE IS ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW.

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ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, FOR EXAMPLE, I DON'T THINK IT'S POLLY-ANNAISH TO SUGGEST THAT THE PROBLEM OVER THE NEXT DECADE WILL NOT BE A HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BUT RATHER THAT THERE WILL BE MORE JOBS THAN THERE ARE SKILLED WORKERS TO FILL THEM. NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND AUTOMATION NOTWITHSTANDING, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST 30 YEARS SUGGESTS THAT ENOUGH JOBS WILL BE CREATED TO KEEP THE LABOR DEMAND AT ABOUT THE CURRENT LEVEL. THE SUPPLY OF SKILLED WORKERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, WILL BE LIMITED BY THREE FACTORS: (1) THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE CANNOT BE FURTHER REDUCED; (2) THE PERCENTAGE OF THE WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE WILL NOT LIKELY GO MUCH HIGHER; AND (3) THE INFLUX OF EIGHTEEN YEAR OLDS INTO THE WORKFORCE WILL DECREASE DRAMATICALLY. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, WE CAN MORE LIKELY EXPECT A SERIOUS SHORTAGE IN SKILLED LABOR PARTICIPANTS SOMETIME IN THIS CENTURY RATHER THAN A LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM.

IN THE SAME WAY, PERHAPS ALL IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS IN 1985 FOR AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION. ALTHOUGH STEADY STATE ENROLLMENT AND TIGHT BUDGETS ARE RIGHT NOW THE CRITICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING OUR DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITIES AS COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS, WE NEED TO CONSTANTLY REMIND OURSELVES THAT THIS IS A TEMPORARY CONDITION. FOR THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT THE POPULATION OF EIGHTEEN YEAR OLDS WILL BEGIN TO CLIMB AGAIN IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT 1990'S, REFLECTING WHAT SOME CALL THE "ECHO" BABY BOOM -- THAT IS, THE CHILDREN OF THE EARLIER BABY BOOM GENERATION. AND

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WHAT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO NOTE IS THAT THIS WILL BE OCCURRING AT THE SAME TIME THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF OUR CURRENT FACULTY MEMBERS WILL BE RETIRING. IN SHORT, WE WILL BE FACED WITH THE DOUBLE CHALLENGE OF ONCE AGAIN GEARING UP FOR GROWING ENROLLMENT WHILE AT THE SAME TIME RESTAFFING OUR COLLEGES.

MY POINT IS THAT THE DECISIONS WE MAKE TODAY MUST CONSIDER THE HERE AND NOW, AND THEY MUST CONSIDER THE RESURGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION THAT IS CERTAIN TO FOLLOW WITHIN THE NEXT DECADE. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE CURRENT SITUATION OF DECLINING ENROLLMENT PROVIDES FERTILE GROUND FOR INNOVATIONS AND EXCITING NEW DIRECTIONS. HOWEVER, WITHOUT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP THAT FERTILE GROUND MAY PROVE ALL TOO BARREN.

THAT BRINGS ME MORE DIRECTLY TO THE TOPIC OF TODAY'S SESSION: LEADERSHIP. WHAT IS IT? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

MY PARTICULAR ASSIGNMENT IS TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP IN THE AREAS OF PROGRAM PLANNING AND PROGRAM ASSESSMENT. I WANT TO SPEAK FIRST AND BRIEFLY ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ACADEMIC STRATEGY. SECONDLY, I WANT TO SPEAK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP IN CARRYING OUT AN EFFECTIVE AND ONGOING ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS.

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PROGRAM PLANNING

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP. THE BEST TREATMENT ON THE SUBJECT THAT I HAVE SEEN IS IN A 1957 BOOK BY PHILLIP SELZNICK, LEADERSHIP IN ADMINISTRATION. IN SELZNICK'S WORDS, A LEADER IS ONE WHO INFUSES AN ORGANIZATION WITH VALUES -- THIS IN CONTRAST TO THE MANAGER WHO SEEKS TO EFFICIENTLY OPERATE THE ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF VALUES AND DIRECTIONS ALREADY DETERMINED. DICK RICHARDSON, IN THE RECENT AACJC SPONSORED MONOGRAPH LEADERSHIP FOR THE 80'S, SAYS THAT THE LAST DECADE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION MIGHT EASILY BE DESCRIBED AS THE ERA OF THE MANAGER. I WONDER HOW MANY OF US WOULD SUGGEST THAT IT COULD BE CALLED THE ERA OF THE LEADER.

IN 1975, THE CARNEGIE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION RELEASED A BOOK TITLED MORE THAN SURVIVAL: PROSPECTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN A PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY. ALMOST TEN YEARS LATER TO THE DAY, HERE WE ARE IN THIS AACJC FORUM TALKING ABOUT "MORE THAN SURVIVAL: LEADERSHIP IMPERATIVES". IT SEEMS THAT MOST OF US HAVE SURVIVED AND OUR INSTITUTIONS TOO. BUT WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR WAYS TO DO MORE THAN SURVIVE. THE PROBLEM IS WE ARE SO BUSY AS MANAGERS SEARCHING FOR THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO ACCOMPLISH CURRENT ACTIVITIES THAT WE SELDOM STOP TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT WHETHER THE CURRENT ACTIVITIES ARE RELEVANT TO OUR RAPIDLY CHANGING EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT.

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STATED SIMPLY AND DIRECTLY, WHAT WE NEED IN OUR COLLEGES IS AN ACADEMIC STRATEGY. THERE IS NO SENSE IN RUNNING THE VERY BEST RAILROAD IF PEOPLE ARE MORE AND MORE USING CARS, BUSES, AND AIRPLANES TO GET AROUND. AS MANAGERS, WE MUST DO THINGS RIGHT; BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY AS LEADERS, WE MUST DO THE RIGHT THINGS. WE MUST HAVE AN ACADEMIC STRATEGY.

AS PART OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES, I SERVE AS A CONSULTANT TO THE MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS WHEN THEY COME INTO MARYLAND TO REACCREDIT OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES. A COMMENT I OFTEN HEAR MADE BY TEAM MEMBERS IS THAT A COLLEGE DOES NOT HAVE A LONG-RANGE ACADEMIC PLAN. ONE WILL TYPICALLY FIND A LONG-RANGE FACILITIES PLAN IN PLACE. ONE WILL USUALLY FIND A LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR MAJOR EQUIPMENT PURCHASES. ONE MAY EVEN FIND A LONG-RANGE STAFFING PLAN. BUT IT IS ONLY VERY SELDOM THAT ONE FINDS A CLEAR AND CONCISE STATEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS THAT A COLLEGE PLANS TO DEVELOP OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS.

IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL, THE COCA COLA COMPANY NOT HAVING A CLEAR PLAN ON WHAT SOFT DRINKS IT PLANS TO INTRODUCE INTO THE MARKETPLACE. IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL, IBM OR APPLE NOT HAVING A CLEAR IDEA ON WHAT PRODUCTS IT INTENDS TO INTRODUCE TO ITS MICROCOMPUTER LINES. THOSE SCENARIOS ARE NOT VERY LIKELY. BUT WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION, WE SIMPLY DO NOT TEND TO PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN THE MANNER OR TO THE EXTENT THAT WE SHOULD.

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AS PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF THE NEGLECT OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES, I CITE TO YOU THE RESULTS OF A RECENT NATIONAL SURVEY OF PRESIDENTIAL VIEWS ON CURRENT AND FUTURE ISSUES FACING COMMUNITY COLLEGES. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION WAS RATED TENTH ON THE LIST OF ISSUES CURRENTLY FACING OUR INSTITUTIONS AND ONLY A SLIGHTLY BETTER SEVENTH ON THE LIST OF TOP FUTURE ISSUES. OTHER ISSUES RANKED BY PRESIDENTS AS HAVING A GREATER IMPORTANCE TO THEIR COLLEGES INCLUDED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE INSTITUTIONS, FACULTY RELATIONS, PLANNING AND ADMINISTERING THE BUDGET, MAINTAINING ENROLLMENT, AND RELATIONS WITH THE STATE. I WILL LEAVE IT TO YOUR JUDGMENT AS TO WHETHER A SURVEY OF ACADEMIC DEANS THROUGHOUT OUR COMMUNITY COLLEGES WOULD HAVE YIELDED A DIFFERENT RESULT.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

ANY DISCUSSION OF PROGRAM PLANNING OBVIOUSLY GOES HAND-IN-HAND WITH A CONSIDERATION OF PROGRAM ASSESSMENT, MY SECOND TOPIC THIS AFTERNOON. BEFORE MOVING ON TO THAT SUBJECT, HOWEVER, LET ME MENTION AS A QUICK ASIDE WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE FINEST CONTEMPORARY PIECE OF WORK ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND STRATEGY TO AMERICA'S POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS --GEORGE KELLER'S ACADEMIC STRATEGY: THE MANAGEMENT REVOLUTION IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION. I COMMEND IT TO YOUR READING.

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KELLER QUOTES PRESIDENT COLIN CAMPBELL OF WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY IN CONNECTICUT, IN A SPEECH TO HIS CAMPUS COMMUNITY, AS REMINDING HIS STAFF THAT "OBSOLESCENCE IS NOT CONFINED TO AUTOMOBILES AND OTHER PRODUCTS OF TECHNOLOGY. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS . . . GROW OLD TOO." THOSE OF US WHO DABBLE IN GARDENING KNOW THAT YOU MUST WATER AT THE BOTTOM AND PRUNE AT THE TOP. IN HIGHER EDUCATION, WE TOO OFTEN NEGLECT THE LATTER. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT EFFORTS NEED NOT LEAD TO THE WHOLESALE PRUNING (READ: TERMINATION) OF ACADEMIC OFFERINGS, AS SOME FEAR. BUT IF DONE IN A SERIOUS WAY, PROGRAM ASSESSMENT DOES RESULT IN SUBSTANTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS IN PLACE AT A COLLEGE.

LIKE THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER'S CONCLUSION ABOUT MODERN MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES, I THINK WE TEND TO MAKE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAN IT NEED BE. SIMPLY STATED, PROGRAM ASSESSMENT WORKS LIKE THIS: EVALUATION CRITERIA ARE ESTABLISHED, INFORMATION IS COLLECTED AND PROGRAMS ARE EVALUATED AGAINST THE CRITERIA, AND THEN PROGRAMS ARE REVISED BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION CONDUCTED.

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THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY MANY CRITERIA THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN ANY SUCH PROGRAM ASSESSMENT EFFORT. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT COLLEGES NEED TO LOOK MAINLY AT THE DEMAND FOR PROGRAMS (BOTH IN TERMS OF STUDENT ENROLLMENTS AND WHAT EMPLOYERS TELL US); WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE QUALITY OF PROGRAMS (THE QUALITY OF FACULTY AND STUDENT OUTCOMES ARE MOST IMPORTANT HERE); AND FINALLY WE NEED TO LOOK AT THE COST OF PROGRAMS. IF WE ARE ABLE TO GET A FIX ON THESE THREE KEY CRITERIA OF DEMAND, QUALITY, AND COSTS, THERE REALLY ISN'T MUCH ELSE WE NEED TO KNOW.

BASED ON THESE CRITERIA, THEN, A NUMBER OF INSTRUCTIONAL DECISIONS ARE MADE. FOR EXAMPLE, LEARNING OBJECTIVES ARE MODIFIED, INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS ARE REVISED, AND SO ON. FURTHERMORE, ONE OF FOUR MANAGEMENT DECISIONS IS MADE BASED ON PROGRAM ASSESSMENT. THE INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES COMMITTED TO THE PROGRAM ARE EITHER <u>INCREASED,</u> THE CURRENT COMMITMENT IS <u>MAINTAINED,</u> RESOURCES ARE <u>DECREASED,</u> OR THE PROGRAM MAY BE <u>TERMINATED.</u> IN SHORT -- AND OBVIOUSLY IN THE GENERAL SENSE --THAT IS PROGRAM ASSESSMENT. IT'S NOT ANY MORE COMPLICATED OR DIFFICULT THAN THAT.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH PROGRAM ASSESSMENT IS A MEANINGFUL PROCESS WITHIN AN INSTITUTION IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS. IF THERE IS A DIFFICULT PART TO PROGRAM ASSESSMENT, THIS IS IT -- GETTING GOOD AND USEFUL INFORMATION ON ACADEMIC PROGRAMS. THE DECISIONS MADE IN A PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PROCESS ARE ONLY AS GOOD AS THE INFORMATION ON WHICH THEY ARE BASED. QUALITY DECISIONS REQUIRE QUALITY INFORMATION SYSTEMS.

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IN MARYLAND, THE STATE COORDINATING BOARD FOR WHOM I WORK HAS DEVELOPED A SYSTEM TO ASSIST COLLEGES IN CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT. WE REFER TO IT AS PDMS – A PROGRAM DATA MONITORING SYSTEM. THIS IS NEITHER THE TIME NOR THE PLACE FOR A "HOW WE DO IT" PRESENTATION. HOWEVER, I DO WANT TO TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH YOU ONE OVERHEAD THAT SHOWS THE COMPUTER PRINTOUT THAT IS PRODUCED FOR EACH ACADEMIC PROGRAM, BOTH CERTIFICATES AND ASSOCIATE DEGREES, AT EACH COLLEGE THROUGHOUT THE STATE. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THE MARYLAND APPROACH IN A MORE DETAILED WAY, I HAVE PREPARED AND HAVE AVAILABLE TODAY A SEVERAL PAGE DESCRIPTION FOR THAT PURPOSE.

** SHOW OVERHEAD **

ESSENTIALLY, THIS SYSTEM LOOKS AT ENROLLMENT AND AWARD DATA, INFORMATION FROM STUDENT FOLLOW-UP STUDIES (FOR EXAMPLE, HOW MANY STUDENTS FROM TRANSFER PROGRAMS ACTUALLY DO TRANSFER, HOW MANY OCCUPATIONAL STUDENTS ACTUALLY GET JOBS, AND SO ON), AND FINALLY CREDIT HOUR COST DATA. THE COMPUTER THEN GOES TO WORK AND EVALUATES THE PROGRAM IN QUESTION ON THESE INDICATORS OVER TIME AND AGAINST SIMILAR PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE STATE. THE END RESULT IS A SERIES OF COMPUTER "FLAGS" INDICATING THAT THE PROGRAM FALLS OUTSIDE OF CERTAIN TOLERANCE LIMITS BUILT INTO THE COMPUTER CODING.

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NOW, THERE IS A VERY IMPORTANT CAUTION THAT MUST BE MADE AND UNDERSTOOD WHEN USING A SYSTEM SUCH AS THIS. ABRAHAM MASLOW ONCE SAID IF THE ONLY TOOL ONE HAS IS A HAMMER, YOU HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL BECAUSE EVERYTHING STARTS LOOKING LIKE A NAIL. THIS PDM SYSTEM IS ONLY ONE TOOL -- AND A VERY QUANTITATIVE TOOL AT THAT. WE PUT THE NUMBERS TO WORK FOR US, BUT AT THE SAME TIME ARE CAREFUL NOT TO LET THE NUMBERS MAKE THE DECISIONS FOR US.

TO SPEAK TO THIS CONCERN, PROGRAM ASSESSMENT IN MARYLAND HAS EVOLVED INTO A TWO-STEP PROCESS. FIRST IS THE PDM PROCESS THAT I HAVE JUST DESCRIBED. NEXT, AND MOST CRITICAL TO THE PROCESS, IS A MORE IN-DEPTH QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT DONE AT THE COLLEGES BY COLLEGE STAFF FOR A FEW SELECTED PROGRAMS. THE PDM SYSTEM IS USED TO IDENTIFY THE BEST CANDIDATES FOR THE MORE IN-DEPTH EVALUATION.

MARYLAND IS NOT THE ONLY STATE CONDUCTING THIS KIND OF STATEWIDE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT EFFORT. AS AN EXAMPLE, A FEW WEEKS AGO I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH COLLEAGUES IN FLORIDA ON RECENT PROGRAM ASSESSMENT EFFORTS COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THAT STATE ARE MAKING. THE STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN FLORIDA HAS TAKEN A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ESTABLISHING STATEWIDE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.

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IT WILL COME AS NO SURPRISE TO YOU, I AM SURE, WHEN I TELL YOU THAT THESE TYPES OF PROGRAM ASSESSMENT EFFORTS ARE NOT ALWAYS RECEIVED ENTHUSIASTICALLY BY THE COLLEGES. HOWEVER, I THINK I AM TELLING IT LIKE IT IS WHEN I SAY THAT IN MARYLAND THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED AND SUPPORTED BY PEOPLE SUCH AS YOURSELVES AT THE COLLEGES. AS TO THE REASONS FOR THIS SUCCESS STORY, WHICH I THINK IT IS, AS BEST I CAN TELL IT RESTS PRIMARILY ON A FIRM COMMITMENT TO A PRINCIPLE THAT IS BEST CAPTURED IN THE GREYHOUND BUS AD THAT WE HAVE ALL HEARD: "LEAVE THE DRIVING TO US". IN MARYLAND, WE LEAVE THE "DRIVING" -- THAT IS TO SAY, THE DAY-TO-DAY INSTRUCTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS -- TO THE COLLEGES.

THE PROGRAM DATA MONITORING SYSTEM AND THE INFORMATION THAT IT PRODUCES IS SHARED WITH THE COLLEGES FOR THEIR USE IN LOCAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT EFFORTS. THE INSTRUCTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS THAT WILL BE MADE AS PART OF THE PROCESS ARE PRIMARILY THEIRS TO MAKE. ON WHETHER OR NOT TO DISCONTINUE A PROGRAM, FOR EXAMPLE, WE LET THE PREPONDERENCE OF EVIDENCE SPEAK FOR ITSELF AND TRUST THE COLLEGE TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION.

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WE FIND THIS STATE COORDINATION/LOCAL CONTROL APPROACH TO WORK QUITE WELL IN MARYLAND. IN FACT, I WANT TO SUGGEST TO YOU THAT THE ESSENCE OF THAT APPROACH CAPTURES SOMETHING THAT MAY BE CRITICAL TO THE LARGER DISCUSSION OF LEADERSHIP THAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN TODAY. IT IS CAPTURED VERY ELEGANTLY IN THE WORDS OF THE SIX CENTURY BC CHINESE PHILOSOPHER LAO-TZE. HIS IDEA OF THE "BEST RULER" (READ:LEADER) IS THIS:

> A LEADER IS BEST WHEN PEOPLE RARELY KNOW THAT HE EXISTS, NOT SO GOOD WHEN PEOPLE OBEY AND PRAISE HIM, WORST WHEN THEY DISPISE AND FEAR HIM. WHEN HE DOES NOT COMMAND THE PEOPLE'S FAITH, THEY WILL LOSE FAITH IN HIM. BUT OF THE BEST, WHEN HIS TASK IS ACCOMPLISHED, HIS WORK DONE, HIS AIM FULFILLED, THE PEOPLE WILL ALL SAY "WE HAVE DONE IT OURSELVES."

IN CONCLUSION, MY VIEW OF THE WORLD THIS AFTERNOON IS THAT IF WE CAN GET PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT AND DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC STRATEGY, AND IF WE CAN GET PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT AND DOING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT BASED ON QUALITY INFORMATION, AND IF WE CAN DO ALL OF THAT WITH PEOPLE BELIEVING THE PROCESS AND ORGANIZATION ARE THEIRS, THEN WE HAVE MORE THAN DONE OUR JOB AS ACADEMIC LEADERS.

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